United Nations E/ICEF/1999/17

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
12 July 1999

Original: English

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Second regular session 1999
7–10 September 1999
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

For action

UNICEF support to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the follow-up to the World Summit for Children in 2001 and additional events

Summary

The present document outlines UNICEF support for the follow-up to the World Summit for Children since 1990, including the mid-decade reviews and the plan to ensure a successful review process for the end-decade goals at national and regional levels. These reviews will provide the basis for the Secretary-General's report to the Special Session of the General Assembly planned in 2001. The Secretary-General's report will provide an overall assessment of progress achieved during the decade, including the lessons learned, an analysis of the main factors inhibiting progress and an overview of the remaining challenges. UNICEF plans to use this crucial period to ensure renewed commitment from Governments and future action for children and youth for the next decade as well as to build an alliance for children's rights including all key partners at the national level.

The role of UNICEF as the secretariat of the Special Session and in support of additional events will have financial and human resources implications. To enable the secretariat to fully support the preparatory process and to mobilize commitment and action for children over the next two years, the Executive Director is proposing that the Executive Board approve start-up funding in the amount of $2,000,000.

* E/ICEF/1999/15

99-20475 (E) 040899

I. Introduction

1. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the General Assembly in November 1989 and entered into force in September 1990. That same month, the World Summit for Children galvanized world leaders around the cause of children. The World Summit adopted the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s. Together, these documents set forth the vision of a "first call" for children. The General Assembly, in resolution 45/217 of 21 December 1990, welcomed the adoption of the World Declaration and Plan of Action, and urged all States and the international community to work for the achievements of the goals and the objectives endorsed therein. A round-table meeting was held in New York in 1993 which set intermediate, mid-decade goals to be achieved by 1995. The UNICEF Executive Board endorsed these goals in its decision 1993/16 (E/ICEF/1993/14).

II. Follow-up to the World Summit for Children

2. Many countries have conducted annual reviews to monitor progress towards the World Summit goals. In 1996, following a mid-decade review, the Secretary-General reported to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly on progress made towards the mid-decade and end-decade goals (A/51/256). The General Assembly welcomed the significant progress made by most countries in achieving the majority of the mid-decade goals. In its resolution 51/186 of 16 December 1996, the General Assembly decided to convene a Special Session in 2001 to review achievements at the end of the decade. The fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly will consider arrangements for the Special Session. Mid-decade national reviews were followed by high-level ministerial meetings in the Latin America and Caribbean and East Asia and the Pacific regions.

3. In 1998, at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General reported on progress in the implementation of the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action, recalled the decision to hold a Special Session of the General Assembly and referred to a possible "additional international event" in which particular attention would be given to the participation of civil society, especially of children themselves.

III. Review process

4. In his report to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General called upon UNICEF to coordinate a global review of progress in the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children. This review would draw upon subnational, national and regional reviews and specific thematic debates, including those to be held in connection with the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This allocation of responsibility is based upon the global presence of UNICEF, its special role in relation to the World Summit for Children and in supporting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the lessons learned. The report to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the Special Session will provide an overall assessment of progress achieved during the decade, including lessons learned, an analysis of the main factors that have inhibited progress and an overview of the remaining challenges and key issues, followed by specific recommendations for the future.

5. The most critical tasks will be at national and subnational levels, where assessments of the current situation of children are required, followed by appropriate analyses, reviews and policy discussions to clarify specific national priorities to accelerate progress for children. On the basis of parameters established by UNICEF, Member States are undertaking their own end-decade reviews of the goals of the World Summit for Children as a basis for the Secretary-General's report. The process will intensify as 2001 approaches. The contribution of UNICEF to the process will be through the multiple indicator cluster surveys planned in 1999 and 2000, routine programme and thematic reviews at national and regional levels, the compilation and analysis of data, and preparation of the Secretary-General's report.

6. Beyond the national level, regional conferences will be organized. Certain regions already have established their own processes for sharing and consolidating national experience, learning and proposals for the future. Other regions will be encouraged to do the same. A regional end-decade review is already planned by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. In these regional efforts, cooperation is increasing among United Nations agencies.

7. Between 1999 and 2000, Governments, United Nations agencies and other partners will assess progress towards the goals agreed upon at the global conferences of the 1990s through the International Conference on Population and

Development + 5 review, the global review of Education for All, the five-year review of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, as well as the Millennium Assembly. These reviews represent important opportunities to complement the World Summit for Children review and to contribute to the preparatory process for the Special Session. The regional commissions may also play a role in convening high-level meetings to review the implementation and follow-up to world summits and global conferences.

8. At the General Assembly Special Session, the Secretary-General will present his report on progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children. Governments will be invited to renew the commitments made at the World Summit for Children and to consider future actions for children in the next decade. In addition to the findings of the end-decade review and of the reviews referred to in paragraph 6 above, proposed future actions will build on the analysis and proposals presented by UNICEF in its report on "The future global agenda for children — imperatives for the twenty-first century" (E/ICEF/1999/10), presented to the Executive Board at its June 1999 annual session and further amplified in June 2000.

IV. 2001 General Assembly Special Session

9. The objectives of the Special Session include reviewing international and national achievements in the implementation of the World Summit Declaration and the Plan of Action, and agreeing on renewed commitments and future action for children and youth in the next decade. Detailed arrangements for the Special Session will be outlined in discussions at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. It is hoped that the tenth anniversary of the World Summit for Children will be characterized by a similar spirit to the one that characterized that event: a spirit of consensus, commitment and urgency in placing the best interests of children above all others.

10. The additional events that are to mark the anniversary of the World Summit for Children will unite, in commitment, the broadest possible alliance for children's rights, including representatives of civil society organizations and the private sector, as well as children and youth themselves. The process of mobilizing this alliance is to be known as "The Leadership Initiative for Children".

11. This global mobilization process will seek to intensify world focus on children and enhance responsibility for the realization of their rights. The Initiative will strengthen and expand strategic alliances with a broad range of actors, building on activities already undertaken in all countries and regions, as well as internationally. This will mean rallying Governments and the public, including the mass media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community groups and the business community, with a special emphasis on empowering and harnessing the fresh ideas and energy of children and youth themselves. This joint assessment of the current situation and discussion of the successes and limiting factors in reaching the goals for children will help to create a common view for the future and agreement on national priorities for the new decade, with each partner's contribution made clear.

12. The Leadership Initiative will seek to regain momentum for the fulfilment of children's rights as a cornerstone for human development and will aim to achieve a quantum leap in positive social change for the new generation. In its role as catalyst and facilitator of the Initiative, and on the basis of its mandate, practical interventions, advocacy and support to policy reform, UNICEF can help to create a widely-shared sense of public accountability for the realization of children's rights.

13. Unbound by the rules of procedure and protocol that will apply at the Special Session, the additional events will allow representatives of all partners in the alliance to gather and share learning derived from the end-decade review process. Through these processes, all key actors will be able to jointly commit themselves to specific activities for children.

14. The Special Session of the General Assembly and additional events are likely to be held in September 2001. United Nations Headquarters in New York could provide the venue, facilitating logistic and administrative arrangements.

V. Implications for UNICEF

15. The role of UNICEF as the secretariat of the Special Session and coordinator of The Leadership Initiative for Children will have financial and human resources implications. A preliminary organizational structure has been established, within existing resources, to guide UNICEF work in the preparation of the Special Session and the additional events. An interdivisional Steering Committee at New York headquarters, chaired by a Deputy Executive Director, provides direction. The Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF also participates in the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is establishing working

groups on specific topics such as communications, children's participation, private sector and NGO partnership, and United Nations coordination.

16. An organizational unit will be created within the Office of the Executive Director, where a senior Professional staff member will act as focal point for the day-to-day planning and tracking of the enterprise. The unit will be expanded during the year 2000 to enable it to fulfil its role. The Global Management Team will periodically review proposals and progress and will provide recommendations and guidance to the Executive Director.

17. In order to ensure that the Special Session and The Leadership Initiative for Children generate maximum benefits for children, UNICEF anticipates a range of mobilization activities. The budget for the Special Session and additional events includes a proposal for additional staff to support the planning process, to work with Governments and other partners to plan and undertake the necessary logistical arrangements, and to provide documentation and information materials. Operational costs relate primarily to office operations, travel, the organization of preparatory meetings, communications and the production and distribution of information materials.

18. To enable the secretariat to fully support the preparatory process, and in order to mobilize commitment and action for children and youth over the next two years, start-up funding from supplementary sources will be required. Therefore, the Executive Director proposes that the Executive Board approve an allocation of up to $2 million for this purpose. At the next annual session of the Executive Board in 2000, a more complete plan of activities and a complete budget proposal will be submitted.

	In United States dollars
Staff costs	900 000
Operating costs	250 000
Communication	350 000
Country support	350 000
Meeting services and support	150 000
Total	**2 000 000**

VI. Draft resolution

19. The Executive Director *recommends* that the Executive Board adopt the following draft resolution on supplementary-funded activities budget estimates for the year 2000:

Supplementary-funded activities budget estimates for the year 2000

The Executive Board

Decides:

That a supplementary-funded budget of $2,000,000 is approved for the year 2000, subject to availability of specific-purpose contributions, as follows: